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STRUCTURAL-FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS OF CLUSTERIZATION OF THE REGIONAL SECURITY COMPLEXES: THE CASE OF FERGANA VALLEY

The article is devoted to the structural-functional analysis of the Buzan-Waeber theory on the example of the Fergana valley, Uzbekistan that is considered as one of the clusters of regional security complexes. There are analyzed and the present the phenomenon of the territorial imperative of the Fergana Valley, in particular geographical and political components, complexity and structure of the economic risk, enclaves, challenges and influence of the Islamic extremism on the region, the overpopulation factor and water deficit. There are analyzed the current structural influence and geopolitical interests of the Russia and China in the region. It is proved that the Fergana Valley in Uzbekistan is the center of gravity of Central Asia and represents the main cluster of regional security. The intrusion of this cluster of Central Asia's regional security complex will lead to an unpredictable security situation throughout the region. There are proposed the authorized mechanisms of responding to threats in the region in the part concerning improvement of the security situation in the investigated region.

Key words: *theory of complexes of regional security clusters of regional security complexes, Fergana valley, Uzbekistan, Central Asia, Collective Security Treaty Organization, Russian Federation, China.*

Problem Statement. The Fergana Valley is shared among Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and is a result of the cartography by former Soviet Leader J. Stalin. As the Russian leader, J. Stalin was aware that a unified the Fergana Valley region could pose a threat to Russia. As a result, he carved up the area between these states, drawing their new borders so as to foster regional tensions among the ethnic Uzbeks, Kyrgyz and Tajiks. The conjugation of global and regional levels of international politics has always been one of the stumbling blocks in the theory of international relations. Therefore, this issue requires the most thorough research at the regional level through the prism of the theory of regional security complexes. This circumstance determines the connection of the general problem with the most important scientific and practical tasks of modern trends of improvement and development of mechanisms of public administration in crisis situations.

Analysis of Recent Research and Publications. Today, the most effective and developed methodology for analyzing the regional dimension of international politics is the theory of regional security complexes. Its authors are B. Buzan and D. Waeber, the founders of the Copenhagen

School of International Relations. In the most complete and comprehensive form, they presented the theory of regional security complexes in their book "Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security" [1]. Although the theory is primarily concerned with security issues, it can also be viewed as a tool for analyzing of the international politics as a whole. This is due to the fact that the security problems form the core of the international politics.

Furthermore, the articles of the national authors are the most devoted to this topic, namely, L.L. Kyanitsya, S.O. Makovsky, O.S. Parkhomchuk, D. Grinev, O.V. Seraja, V.A. Sokolov, I.V. Tikhonenko and Y.P. Shveshnikov.

The Purpose of the Article. The purpose of this article is to research the phenomenon of the system of cluster of the theory of regional security complexes of Central Asia on the example of the Fergana valley, Uzbekistan, and to analyze the relationship between the mentioned system and global processes.

Presenting Main Material. The Fergana Valley is located in the heart of Central Asia and the geographical center of the Eurasian continent (Fig. 1). The valley touches the interests of major interna-

tional and foreign competitors as well as regional powers. The area of the Fergana Valley embraces many so called "painful points" which are considered as a starting point for tension for different ethnicities living in the region. The impact of "painful points" opens up a variety of possibilities to influence and steer emotions among the citizens in the neighboring countries. In fact, the Fergana Valley has the potential to create tension and is the most explosive area on the region. The "bomb with the delayed clockwork" has the potential to accumulate demographic and socio-economic problems, smoldering ethno-territorial, water-energy conflicts, threats of terrorism, drug trafficking and political instability. The valley splits and separates the West and the Orthodox from the Muslim world and it can be called as a brewing and melting pot where the "clash of civilizations" [2] might occur in the near future.

Until 1920, when the people in the region of the Fergana Valley were asked who they belong to by nationality, they might have answered: "I am a Muslim". But J. Stalin used his pencil to

draw a map which divided not only the region into different countries but in different nationalities and ethnicities as well. In politics there are no coincidences, and the Central Asian countries began to develop different conditions, "to play" and to live under different rules or even without rules. This political game has resulted in the mineral-rich Uzbekistan (gold, uranium, gas, minerals etc. [3]) developing into a situation where half of the population lives below the poverty line, and this alone is a source for social unrest. Today Uzbekistan is ruled by seven clans [4] with a high amount of corruption, and the countries' economy almost depends on remittances from Russia.

The Complexities of the Fergana Valley:

1. Poor Governance and Corruption. Corruption, poor governance and the absence of transparency and rule of law are deep-seated problems in Central Asia and the major problem for economic growth in the region [5]. Billions of dollars have been siphoned off by political elites who are adept at sharing the economic spoils among their families

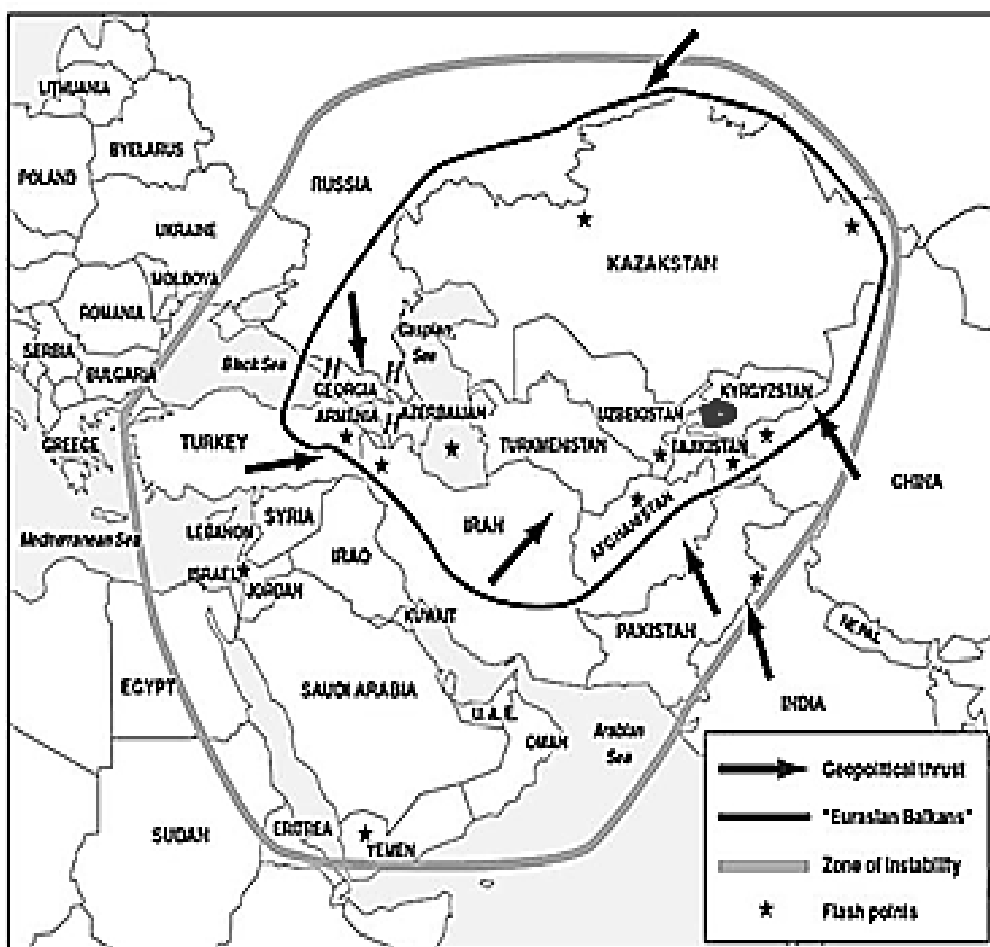


Fig. 1. Zbigniew Brzezinski's View of "The Eurasian Balkans"

Source: "The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives", Zbigniew Brzezinski, 1997

and various economic, political, and clan interests – often at the expense of a more efficient economic use [6]. Combined with the lack of an independent judiciary, corruption can be a tool of governance, allowing Central Asia autocrats to enforce the political loyalty of some insiders and to punish rivals [7; 8]. Such a political behavior and poor governance, corruption, and only a few economic opportunities for large sections of the population are the toxic mix that will increase state and regime fragility [9] and might lead to a structural economic risk and finally to a collapse of a political regime.

2. Economic structure risk. While the government may continue to protect the interests of foreign investment partners, the underlying economic structure in Uzbekistan is not likely to change in the foreseeable future [10]. Low levels of integration into the world economy limit Central Asia foreign liabilities. However, most Central Asia countries are highly dependent on commodity exports, especially gas. The economy is not competitive and state intervention is high [11; 12].

3. Enclaves. As a result of administrative separation during the Soviet period, the building of enclaves complicated significantly the situation in the Fergana Valley (the Fergana Valley has eight enclaves). As a result, often unrest and conflicts break out in the enclaves. The States react by establishing new rules and laws which are often misunderstood as suppression. Although conflicts happen at the domestic level they are often understood as an ethnic coloring, and that steers emotion and makes the blood boil [13]. Most of the time it ends up in local riots, and nationalism and hatred is on the rise.

4. Islamic Extremism. In all Central Asian States there is a growing concern/fear of a creeping threat of Islamic extremism. Local powers often exaggerate the risk of the infiltration of violent extremism, and they bully legitimate political protest as extremism in order to justify repression against those ethnic minorities [14]. The extremist threat to the region has been managed by most of the Central Asia countries, and it is contained largely south of the Central Asia border [15]. Nonetheless, the threat is there, and these groups could potentially exploit a crisis in the region caused

by economic problems, leadership succession, or some other development to raise their profile.

Quite often, talk of terrorism in Central Asia is hyperbolic: governments often paint opposition, criminals, and terrorists with the same set of labels as “extremists” and treat them accordingly. Like the boy crying wolf, this makes it difficult to discern when the wolves are actually approaching the herd. One of the projects may help add some depth to the way regional governments think about counterterrorism. There is a tendency among some Central Asian governments to misrepresent political opposition as being extremist to justify their own authoritarian policies and seek outside assistance (usually financial).

5. The factor of the overpopulation. Unique for the region is the Fergana Valley’s natural and geographical position. The valley’s is known as an area which is the agriculture and cattle farming source for the whole of Central Asia, which in turn affects the demographic situation. The population increase in the valley make up to 2% per year [16] – more than 300 000 people each year [17] [Fig. 2]. The Fergana Valley has the highest density of population in Central Asia [18]. In the near future it may become one of the most densely populated regions of the planet. The overpopulation is directly related to unemployment, and as a side effect, labor migra-

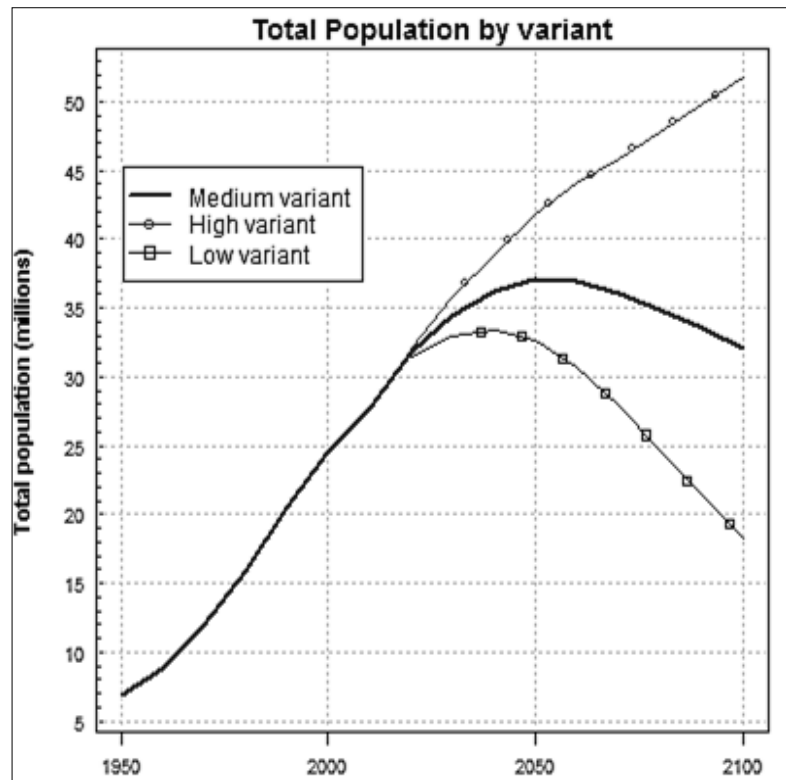


Fig. 2. UZB's total population by variant

Source: UN, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2015)

tion is very common in the valley. The growth rate of labor migration is directly linked to an increase in unemployment. Migration creates new social problems which are previously not peculiar to the region, such as a doubling of the number of divorces, the increase in single-parent families with toddlers, and as consequence a gender misbalance in the migration stream. With the increase of the population [19], a lack of water [20] comes with it. The economic crisis in Russia makes the situation in the Fergana Valley even worse. More and more workers are coming home from Russia, and that increases the socio-demographic risk. This means a lack of remittances which are needed for most of the families to keep the families together.

6. Water [21] deficiency as “a reason for regional confrontation/tension or even war” (Uzbekistan’s President Islam Karimov warned in 2012).

Due to the almost complete absence of water-saving technologies, the problem of water shortage and water irrigation leads regularly to inter-farm and inter-ethnic disputes and conflicts in the valley. Up to 60% of the Fergana Valley does not have access to quality drinking water, and the population is forced to use water from the irrigation canals. The water from the canals is polluted with raw sewage, and this leads to a sharp deterioration of the sanitary situation and a growth of sicknesses [22]. The water pollution is not only a social problem but a political issue as well [23; 24]. The use of water resources in Central Asia might even be dangerous for the stability of the country, and it is going to raise tension between countries. The deficiency of water can be a real source of threat to regional security [25] and has the potential to imbalance even “stable” bilateral relations between Central Asia’s countries [26] in the Fergana Valley.

Central Asia is not blessed by geography. Riddled with harsh deserts, treeless steppes and large mountains, there is little land that can sustain and feed a sizable population or any meaningful economic development. The one exception to this rule is the Fergana Valley, which features fertile agricultural land and a relatively developed industrial sector. This region is inhabited by nearly 30 million [27] people – roughly half of all of Central Asia’s population [28] is concentrated in a small fraction of land. The Fergana Valley has long been the industrial and agricultural heartland of Central Asia. Because of its fertility, the valley has also been one of the most unstable areas in the region since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Fergana Valley region, shared by the Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan

and Tajikistan, with all packages of difficulties’ is the geopolitical center of gravity of Central Asia [29] and it has the potential for an armed conflict.

Russia’s change of “modus operandi”.

The most important factor that determines Russia’s foreign policy today is the “territorial imperative”. The Russian leadership’s desire is to maintain control over the post-Soviet space as its “sphere of influence”. Realizing that Central Asia for Russia is the “Achilles’ heel”, Moscow can keep its influence in Central Asia only through economic cooperation and “power”. Therefore, Russia may try to weaken the positions of Central Asian States regarding their integration in organizations like the EU or in closer cooperation with the U.S., China, or Iran.

In the short and medium term, Russia definitely tries to hold the Central Asian States in its sphere of influence. This strategy has an additional benefit for Russia, as it allows them not only to limit China’s expansion in the region, but also for using the region to put pressure on Beijing itself. First of all, the Russian influence in Central Asia will enable Moscow to influence the energy communication between China and Central Asian States. It can be expected that Russia will significantly increase and safeguard its interest in the energy sector. However, even more important than keeping the former Soviet Union space under Moscow’s influence is the pressure on China which comes with an increased role of Russia in the area. The influence of Russia in Central Asian States may provoke China to a more active presence in Central Asia, including the military-political sphere. In the absence of an adequate coordination mechanism between Beijing and Washington that could lead into a sharp deterioration in the U.S. – China relations. Such a strategy might lead to an increase of tension in South-East Asia and may force China to seek a compromise or at least to cooperate with Russia in Central Asia.

Russia’s role in Central Asian States.

Uzbekistan’s officials are almost ready for a new presidential election, and Russia understands this situation better than any other country. Therefore, over the past several months Putin has paid a lot of attention to Uzbekistan and the region [30] of Central Asia. The fear of losing control over the Central Asia region pushes him to take action that very likely will have the “butterfly effect”. Because of Western sanctions, Russia is unable to counter the growing China influence in Central Asia with its own economic initiatives. Therefore, Russia might use the same strategy

in Central Asia that Moscow uses on its western flank of the former Soviet Union: to influence Central Asian States politically and militarily in order to prevent other foreign influence in its backyard.

Russia has a very efficient link to Uzbekistan's military elite. However, Russia does not have much influence in the country, where most of the population is ethnic Uzbeks and Muslims; only 5% of the population is ethnic Russia. Uzbekistan has suspended its membership in the Collective Security Treaty Organization. Even before the suspension, the country was not a part of the organization's rapid response force and did not participate in training and exercises, and did not share the Collective Security Treaty Organization's views on the relationship with Afghanistan. Uzbekistan believes that any agreements with Afghanistan should be of bilateral nature, rather than on the Collective Security Treaty Organization level.

However, almost 20% of Uzbekistan's export (including 75% of gas) [31] goes to Russia. Uzbekistan depends heavily on Russia import – from oil products and electricity to processed food items. The money transfers from migrant [Fig. 3] workers (remittances) from Russia to Uzbekistan constitutes a significant part of the Uzbekistan's GDP: in 2015, money transfers from Russia were almost \$3 billion [32]. Because of Uzbekistan's stance on the Collective Security Treaty Organization and water related issues in Central Asia especially in the Fergana Valley, it may facilitate the country's isolation. Therefore, it is no surprise that Uzbekistan has its own plans regarding the future of the Fergana Valley, including strengthening the control over the Southern Kyrgyzstan and the Northern Tajik border. Uzbekistan's population size and surplus amount of natural resources grant a kind of self-sufficiency and allows a kind of independence from Russia and other countries. However, Uzbekistan is not strong enough to challenge Russia on its own. So, Russia has the capacity and probably the will to control and influence Uzbekistan indirectly, through military presence in neighboring countries.

China's interest & influence: economic, investment and trade as "smart offensive".

China's economic footprint in Central Asia has increased dramatically. China's ambition to expand its economic influence might even have political implications. Trade has been the principal driver of this new relationship. Trade between China and Uzbekistan was estimated between \$350 million and \$750 million a year in the early post-Soviet period of the 1990s [33]. In 2013, it passed the \$50 billion mark and surpassing the region's trade with Russia [34]. Energy exports have been the primary factor in the expanding economic relationship between Uzbekistan and China. Since the mid-1990s, China has invested billions of dollars in energy-related infrastructure projects and acquisitions in the region's energy sector. In general, Central Asia supplied 20 percent of China's gas consumption by the end of 2015, and this share is expected to grow as China continues to expand its pipeline network in the region [35]. Altogether China is investing a huge amount of money in two main areas: the oil and electricity industries.

China's emergence as the dominant actor in the region's energy sector has profound geopolitical and geo-economics consequences. China's



Fig. 3. Labor Migration from Central Asia to Russia in the Context of the Economic Crisis (2016)

Source: Valdai Paper 55

emergence as the leading economic and geopolitical force in Central Asia is unmistakable. It remains to be seen how China will exercise its influence against Russia in the mid and long term. Unlike Russia, China's leadership has not yet declared any geopolitical ambitions in the region and has certainly not claimed Central Asian States as a China's sphere of privileged interest [36].

Beijing is also maintaining a low profile on security issues. Again, in contrast to Russia, China has not sought to project its military power or to maintain military bases in Central Asia. It can be expected that China is protecting its economic stakes in the region, and it may develop capabilities to play a security role if a spillover of violent extremists is eminent along the Central Asian States-Sino borderline. This role may include the potential for military intervention in Central Asia, if instability in the region makes it necessary to protect China investments there. China prefers to rely on the political and the economic domain rather than on military means to protect its equities, and has ruled out any military intervention in Central Asia under any circumstances [37]. It is, however, an open question how long China will rely on Russia to be the lead security provider in Central Asia [38]. Even in the military sphere, the outlook for Russia to maintain its leadership in Central Asia is not encouraging. The key rationale for Russia military presence in the region is to guard against the threat of instability spreading from Afghanistan and to secure a buffer along Russia's southern periphery [39].

China has done a lot of investment in Central Asia. In the case of Uzbekistan, China's long-term interest is focused on economic issues and to a lesser extent on the political and almost none on the military domain. It is important for China to improve its position in Uzbekistan from a geopolitical point of view. For China, Uzbekistan is a key state in Central Asia. Therefore, China's economic activities are mainly subordinated to this goal. In the context of the global financial and economic crisis, it can be expected that China is focusing on buying assets in the energy sector. However, Uzbekistan has so far refrained from a large-scale sale of its commodity assets to foreign companies. At the moment, China tries to expand its economic role without having a military or political foothold in the region. It may end in the mid or even long term when Uzbekistan's economy will work basically only for the Sino site.

Conclusions and Suggestions. Uzbekistan's and most of the Central Asian States governments don't have any strategic vision to develop the coun-

tries. Beyond the risk of internal collapses, there is also the potential over the next several years for intraregional tensions to spark armed conflicts. It might start in the Fergana Valley because of ethnic, economic and social tension. The factor of overpopulation or a dispute over access to water might be the starting point. Any unrest in the Fergana Valley would affect Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan and could be used by extremist to expand their foothold in the region.

All Central Asian countries understand that there is presently a threat to the security. The conflict potential in the Fergana Valley will continue to grow. It should be clearly understood that even the slightest "casus belly" is able to provoke an open inter-ethnic conflict, the consequences of which could be catastrophic for the entire region. Any serious conflict in the Fergana Valley will lead to an increase in refugees and in the flow of drugs, the active penetration of extremist groups of radical Islamists to Russia's territory, and possible terrorist attacks.

Under the umbrella of the Collective Security Treaty Organization Russia will try to use this organization to keep its influence in the region for its own national interests. However, the Central Asian countries are not happy to be a part of structures or Russian led unions. They prefer a multi vector approach which is open to other organizations and countries.

If tension arises in Central Asian States, Fergana Valley will be the detonator for causing the "volcanic activity in the region". "A social explosion" in the Fergana Valley may destabilize the entire region of Central Asia.

The current situation in the Fergana Valley area has the potential for an armed conflict in the Central Asian countries. This is based on two key issues in the Fergana Valley: the overpopulation combined with its sectarian tension and disputes over water sharing.

The future cluster of the Fergana Valley depends on several factors: the uncertainty of the political succession in almost all Central Asian States; the clan system as a style of public administration, corruption and poor governance; the improvement of the economic situation; the continued border disputes; lack of water; and the threat of Islamic extremism. All of these factors have to be solved at the same time to stabilize and to improve political situation in the region.

Proposals to solve problem issues could be:

- to keep on promoting democracy in Central Asian States and focus on the reform agenda to

improve social and economic conditions and to create more hospitable condition for the society in Central Asian States;

– to avoid militarizing policy by overreacting to the threat of Islamic extremism which regional governments perennially hype to support its authoritarian policies and garner security assistance from outside partners [40].

– to strengthen the cooperation in a “C5+1” [41] format which should lead into practical plans to support Central Asian States and at the same time avoid “empty” diplomatic visits without practical results.

Increase the number of activities and the role of NGOs in the region with concentration on the “struggle for the minds and hearts” of the younger generation.

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Житник О. М. Структурно-функціональний аналіз кластеризації регіональних систем безпеки на прикладі Ферганської долини

Статтю присвячено структурно-функціональному аналізу теорії Бузана-Вевера на прикладі Ферганської долини (Узбекистан), яку розглянуто як один із кластерів регіональних комплексів безпеки. Досліджено феномен територіального імперативу Ферганської долини, зокрема географічні та політичні складники, структуру економічного ризику, анклавів, проаналізовано сучасні виклики та вплив ісламського екстремізму на регіон, фактор перенаселення і дефіцит води. Визначено сучасний структурний вплив та власні геополітичні інтереси Російської Федерації і Китаю у регіоні. Доведено, що саме Ферганська долина Узбекистану є центром тяжіння Центральної Азії та основним кластером регіональної безпеки. Порушення зазначеного кластеру регіонального комплексу безпеки Центральної Азії призведе до непередбачуваної безпекової ситуації у всьому регіоні. Розроблено авторські механізми реагування на загрози в регіоні у частині, що стосується покращення безпекового становища регіону, що досліджувався.

Ключові слова: теорія комплексів регіональної безпеки, кластери комплексів регіональної безпеки, Ферганська долина, Узбекистан, Центральна Азія, Організація договору про колективну безпеку, Російська Федерація, Китай.

Житник О. М. Структурно-функциональный анализ кластеризации региональных систем безопасности на примере Ферганской долины

Статья посвящена структурно-функциональному анализу теории Бузана-Вевера на примере Ферганской долины (Узбекистан), которая рассмотрена как один из кластеров региональных комплексов безопасности. Исследованы феномены территориального императива Ферганской долины, в частности географические и политические составляющие, сложности и структура экономических рисков, анклавов, проанализированы современные вызовы и влияние исламского экстремизма на регион, фактор перенаселения и дефицит воды. Определено современное структурное влияние и собственные геополитические интересы Российской Федерации и Китая в регионе. Доказано, что именно Ферганская доли-

на Узбекистана представляет собой центр тяжести Центральной Азии и основной кластер региональной безопасности. Именно нарушение указанного кластера регионального комплекса безопасности Центральной Азии приведет к непредсказуемой ситуации безопасности во всем регионе. Разработаны авторские механизмы реагирования на угрозы в регионе в части, касающейся улучшения вопросов безопасности исследуемого региона.

Ключевые слова: теория комплексов региональной безопасности, кластеры комплексов региональной безопасности, Ферганская долина, Узбекистан, Центральная Азия, Организация договора о коллективной безопасности, Российская Федерация, Китай.